

Today's News - Wednesday, April 1, 2015

- Stephens and Minutillo have the first positive words we've heard about Mayne's "Empire State-sized tower" in the Swiss Alps: it "turns out to be trim and sedate in its shape and wrapping - clad in glass" (though from the ground, you might feel like "Jack stumbling upon the Beanstalk").
- Of architecture and the "global problem" of glass vs. birds: architects "are becoming more attuned to the issue" (please tell us Mayne's glassy Alpine needle wont' become a feather factory for Björk costumes!).
- Betsky offers a bemused take on the "Apple circle," the "Facebook warehouse," and the "Google circus": one age-old question "for all monuments to vanity and utopian ambitions: Which structure will make the better ruin?"
- Heathcote has a most thoughtful take on the complexities of architecture in Africa, and "the discrepancies between the corporate behemoths and the ingenious interventions into the informal - made yet more complex because so many of Africa's finest architects work outside the continent," and "the most interesting recent buildings here have been built by young foreign practices."
- A fascinating (and sad) Q&A with Iraqi-born, Jordan-based Fethi, who "is monitoring the ISIS-led destruction of historic sites and spearheading efforts to stop it": "Nothing. Nothing can be done."
- Page\Park promises transparency in its work to bring back Mackintosh's Glasgow School of Art, and its "staggering" discovery: "You would never have said this angelic space was made by carpenters whacking nails. You can make magic with a hammer, saw and nails. That should be an inspiration to young architects."
- The Warhol Museum drops a bombshell on NYC's Essex Crossing developers by dropping plans to open a branch in the 6-acre Lower East Side development.
- Civitas takes inspiration from the history of a former baseball stadium site in San Diego to create the new Lane Field Park.
- Brownell delves deep into research projects exploring brain-computer interfaces that "could one day find a place" in architecture and the built environment: the "use of EEG technology in the design, construction, and occupation of buildings may not result in the dire circumstances predicted by dystopian authors, but instead a more humane future" that is "not only stranger than fiction - it's also brighter."
- Loftness goes Down Under to talk about the role of women in green building, and acknowledges that it "is a tough topic."
- The Bangkok Post offers an interesting Q&A with Heatherwick re: his philosophy, process, and projects.
- Winners all: Knight Cities Challenge awards 32 community projects across the country, from porch swings in public spaces in Charlotte, to a "science barge" in Miami, and "Houselets" in San Jose.
- Woodbury University's Arid Lands Institute wins \$100,000 AIA Latrobe Prize + Impressive projects nab APA 2015 National Planning Excellence and Achievement Awards.
- A good reason to head to Harvard later this month: GSD/Van Alen Institute's Design Competition Conference (an impressive line-up of speakers!).
- Call for entries: Tristan da Cunha International Design Ideas Competition + Clark's take on where Tristan is (site visits not possible): "It could end up being a case of 'I'm an architect, get me out of here.'" + FX International Interior Design Awards 2015.
- Two we couldn't resist (it is April 1, after all): The U.S. Government proposes a Failed Public Space amendment "designed to ensure that future generations of Americans can continue to not use them" (damn those "rogue activists, sometimes referred to as Placemakers" transforming these wastelands!).
- No need to worry about Thames view corridors: Heatherwick's Garden Bridge "to be upended and turned into Europe's tallest tower - surpassing even Morphosis's Swiss monster. Careful pruning will ensure the planted skyscraper does not impinge on any protected views. Peter Zumthor was said to be speechless."

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[Yodelay-hee-what? Thom Mayne designs an Empire State-sized tower for a Swiss village: ...the tower turns out to be trim and sedate in its shape and wrapping...clad in glass, helping the architecture dissolve into its natural setting. Unless you're on the ground...you might think you were Jack stumbling upon the Beanstalk as it soars into the clouds. By Suzanne Stephens and Josephine Minutillo -- Morphosis \[images\]- Architectural Record](#)

[Glass Architecture Is Killing Millions of Migratory Birds: Architects, however, are becoming more attuned to the issue....It's a global problem...Nearly 1 billion migratory birds perish each year due to collisions with windows and lighted structures. By Anne Quito -- KieranTimberlake Architects; Studio Gang/Jeanne Gang \[images\]- CityLab \(formerly The Atlantic Cities\)](#)

[The Circus Comes to Town in Silicon Valley: Aaron Betsky evaluates three megaprojects currently underway in Silicon Valley: Together, these three projects represent the spearhead of virtual urbanity's attack on traditional notions of how to give shape to the built environment...the next question is the age-old one for all monuments to vanity and utopian ambitions: Which structure - the Apple circle, the Facebook warehouse, or the Google circus - will make the better ruin? -- BIG - Bjarke Group/Thomas Heatherwick; Norman Foster/Foster + Partners; Frank Gehry \[images\]- Architect Magazine](#)

[African architecture: infinitely, thrillingly diverse: The richness of traditions and the discrepancies between the corporate behemoths and the ingenious interventions into the informal make Africa an impossible subject. The situation is made yet more complex because so many of Africa's finest architects work outside the continent. Also, the most interesting recent buildings here have been built by young foreign practices... By Edwin Heathcote -- Hassan Fathy; David Adjaye; Diébédo Francis Kéré; Kunlé Adeyemi; NLE Architects; Joe Osae-Addo; SelgasCano; Abba; Jo Noero; Peter Rich; Pierre Goudiaby Atepa- Financial Times \(UK\)](#)

[Newsmaker: Ihsan Fethi: This Jordan-based architect is monitoring the ISIS-led destruction of historic sites and spearheading efforts to stop it...Architect and historic conservation specialist...has chronicled the loss of historic art and architecture in his native Iraq for decades..."Nothing. Nothing can be done." By William Hanley- Architectural Record](#)

[Every drawing in Mac project will be made public: Winning architect speaks of importance of transparency - and their 'staggering' discovery: "You would never have said this angelic space was made by carpenters whacking nails. That was a revelation for us...You can make magic with a hammer, saw and nails. That should be an inspiration to young architects." -- David Page/Page\Park- BD/Building Design \(UK\)](#)

[Architects split over proposed restoration of Charles Rennie Mackintosh's Glasgow School of Art library: ...school's leaders seemed confident the building could be authentically restored...rejected previous criticisms that restoring the building to Mackintosh's original plans ran the risk of creating a "Mockintosh" copy..."Mackintosh would have preferred a new modern library" by Alan Dunlop; "Recreating one of the great interiors was the only sensible option" by Michael Davis- The National \(Scotland\)](#)

[Warhol Museum drops plan of opening branch in New York: ...had been exploring its participation in the Essex Crossing development...10,000-square-foot branch was to be part of a 6-acre development on the Lower East Side in Seward Park...- Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)

[Civitas creates landscape immersed in history at Lane Field Park: ...on the former...home to the then-Pacific Coast League San Diego Padres from 1936-1957 -- history that played an integral role in the design...visually tied to the Port of San Diego's massive North Embarcadero Visionary Plan, which includes the Civitas-designed grand esplanade that opened in November 2014... \[images\]- World Landscape Architecture](#)

The Not-So-Dystopian Future of Mind Control in Architecture: Brain-computer interfaces could one day find a place in the built environment: That the students were able to affect shape-shifting architectural surfaces by thought alone is surprising indeed, and it raises questions about the future use of EEG technology in the design, construction, and occupation of buildings...may not result in the dire circumstances predicted by dystopian authors, but instead a more humane future...truth is not only stranger than fiction - it's also brighter. By Blaine Brownell- Architect Magazine

Women in Green Building: Speak Up and Do What You Love: Carnegie Mellon University professor Vivian Loftness acknowledges that the role of women in the green building movement is a tough topic...referenced "Women in Green: Voices of Sustainable Design" by Kira Gold and Lance Hosey, as a starting point for women keen to make a mark in the industry.- Sourceable

Philosophy of design: Thomas Heatherwick on his creative projects and pursuit of the real issues: "The world of architecture has become quite sterile. New things are made of shiny glass, smooth flat aluminium panels and paint. They might be a wonky shape but the emotional response to those materials are the same. I hope for my studio a new direction. Handmade buildings." -- Heatherwick Studio [images]- Bangkok Post

Urban culture 'consulates', Miami 'science barge' among 32 winners of first Knight Cities Challenge: Jurors reviewed more than 7,000 applications from the 26 eligible communities... -- Knight Foundation [link to images, info]- The Architect's Newspaper

Woodbury University's Arid Lands Institute Wins \$100,000 AIA Latrobe Prize: The prize will help fund the development of a digital water mapping tool aimed at designing solutions for harvesting water locally.- Architect Magazine

APA 2015 National Planning Excellence and Achievement Award winners - American Planning Association (APA)

Design Competition Conference: will review the state of design competitions today and their impact on competitors, sponsors, design, and the public interest, through the lens of professional, ethical, business, legal, and public policy questions; Cambridge, MA, April 23-24; sponsored by the Harvard Graduate School of Design and Van Alen Institute -- Jerold S. Kayden; David van der Leer; Craig Dykers/Snøhetta; Mohsen Mostafavi/GSD; Francine Houben/Mecanoo; Reed Kroloff/jones | kroloff, etc. - Van Alen Institute

Call for entries: Tristan da Cunha International 2-Stage Design Ideas Competition: help the community of around 270 people become self-sustainable and ensure that Edinburgh of the Seven Seas is viable for future generations. Stage 1 deadline: June 2- RIBA Competitions

Wanted: architect to redesign remote island homes (sorry, site visit not possible): It could end up being a case of "I'm an architect, get me out of here"...a unique design competition in which the winner will work for the most remote settled island in the world...There will be no site visit ahead of the pitches because of the difficulty of reaching the island and no commitment to take the job. By Nick Clark- Independent (UK)

Call for entries: FX International Interior Design Awards 2015 for the very best of interior projects and products; deadline: July 24- FX Magazine

U.S. Government Announces Campaign to Save Historically Bad Places: "Our new Failed Public Space amendment is designed to...ensure that future generations of Americans can continue to not use them"...Rogue activists, sometimes referred to as Placemakers, have been staging interventions in these wastelands - transforming them into hotbeds for such historically inaccurate activities as kissing, smiling, mingling, putting feet in fountains, and generally having fun.- Project for Public Spaces (PPS)

Garden Bridge to be upended and turned into Europe's tallest tower: Thomas Heatherwick's bridge will become green skyscraper surpassing even Morphosis' Swiss monster: The upended Garden Folly, as it has been christened, will be 401m tall, at the peak of the April growing season...Careful pruning will ensure the planted skyscraper does not impinge on any protected views...Peter Zumthor was said to be speechless. [image]- BD/Building Design (UK)

-- Atelier Peter Zumthor: His buildings stand out against their surrounding contexts, whether urban environments or natural landscapes, as statements of formal clarity. By Martin Søberg

-- Interview: Jacques Herzog: Herzog & de Meuron is one of the largest and currently, perhaps the most successful Swiss architectural practice...Q&A about his current trials and tribulations, as well as his influences and goals. By Ulf Meyer

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